



Foreign Agricultural Service

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Japan

Biotechnology

Japanese Government Intensifies Monitoring for Unapproved Biotechnology Food Products 2001

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Report Highlights:

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare requested additional funding for fiscal year 2002 to strengthen monitoring for unapproved biotechnology traits in imported foods. MHLW currently focuses monitoring on biotechnology produced corn, soybeans, potato and papaya varieties that lack approval in Japan.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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Responding to consecutive incidents of snack foods contaminated with unapproved biotechnology traits prohibited for import and sale in Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) requested a larger Japanese fiscal year (JFY) 2002 budget to strengthen inspection of foods. MHLW plans to increase the number of import samples for monitoring and consolidate the inspection system of local authorities. MHLW requested 269 million yen (approximately \$2 million) for JFY2002 (April 2002-March 2003, an increase of 90 million yen from this year's budget).

For certain raw material food products, MHLW samples and tests at quarantine stations 5 percent of total imports for unapproved biotech varieties. The current tests for unapproved biotech varieties include corn, potatoes, soybeans and papaya. MHLW plans to double the number of samples, focusing on processed foods utilizing the testing services of local prefectural office health authorities.

To strengthen verification of test results performed by local authorities on food products taken from retail shelves, MHLW proposes to improve the analysis accuracy of testing by reputable testing organizations utilized by local health authorities. Technical seminars will also be held for officials from local authorities.

MHLW's budget request is subject to change during the government's budget formulation process.